

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, 2 weeks ago, Representatives BARBARA LEE, CHRIS GIBSON, RICHARD HUDSON, and I hosted a Poverty Simulation for Members of Congress and their staffs here on Capitol Hill. Run by Entergy and Catholic Charities USA, this poverty simulation provided a way for policymakers and their staffs to experience poverty in a new and different way.

This simulation allowed participants to experience firsthand what it is like to be poor in America. Far too often, we talk about poverty, but we don't understand it. Being poor is hard work. It is hard to figure out how to stretch your food dollar and get from home to school to work with limited transportation, for example, when you are poor and are living on a limited income.

This simulation is one step in understanding how we end hunger and poverty. We can't begin this fight if we can't come together as Republicans and Democrats, and simulations like this could prove to be the way we all start working together on this common goal.

#### THE ERADICATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, Pope Francis has spoken about the conditions in Iraq for Christians.

Now His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, said the following today:

As the widespread violence and aggression facing Christians and minority groups in Mosul, Iraq, intensifies, it is increasingly evident that the fundamental right and freedom to practice one's faith and belief is—and continues to be—grossly violated.

We are currently witnessing an unacceptable widespread implementation of extremist religious ideology that threatens the lives of all Iraqis who do not fit within its ever-narrowing perspective. While this situation stands to eradicate centuries of coexistence and culture in the region, it also threatens to significantly and negatively impact these communities for generations to come. If left unchallenged, it is not Iraq alone that is at risk, but the potential is intensified for the replication of this ideology as a viable and legitimate model for others across the Middle East.

He then thanked the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies and its chairman, His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, for expressing his concern about the current situation in Mosul.

Everyone—the President, the Congress, religious leaders—should speak out on the eradication of Christianity in the Middle East.

#### VETERANS' CARE AND CONGRESS' AUGUST RECESS

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge congressional leaders to keep the Senate and House in session and to forgo the August recess until both Chambers come together and pass compromise legislation to help our veterans get access to the timely and quality health care they have earned and deserve.

In light of the serious allegations of wrongdoing within the Department of Veterans Affairs, in addition to unacceptably long wait times at the VA medical facilities, it is urgent that a fix be put in place now.

Last month, both the Senate and House passed legislation that would expand veterans' ability to seek care at non-VA facilities under certain conditions, strengthen Congress' oversight of the VA, and eliminate performance-related bonuses for VA employees. Since then, the Conference Committee, tasked to work out a compromise between the two bills, has yet to do so.

I know I speak for many when I say the health of the veterans who have served us so bravely should not be placed on hold while Congress is away in August. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in calling on Congress to stay in session until we do right by our veterans.

#### PASSAGE OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the National Defense Authorization Act and to call on Congress to come together and pass this important bill so that our troops have the support they need to succeed in the field and so that our military commanders and policymakers have the certainty they need to conduct our Nation's national security affairs.

This year's NDAA has already been voted on by the House, passing with bipartisan support.

In addition to keeping troops adequately equipped and trained, this year's legislation also includes a piece of legislation called the Medical Evaluation Parity for Service Members Act, or MEPS Act, which is a bill I introduced that will help our military move toward a more comprehensive and effective approach to suicide prevention and detection.

While our military has made great strides to address issues of mental illness, it is tragic events such as those at Fort Hood that remind us we must do better.

Madam Speaker, I am calling on the Senate to move forward on this legislation so that we can fulfill our commitment to those who serve in uniform. They deserve as much.

#### JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, as a former State supreme court justice and now as the ranking Democrat on a subcommittee whose responsibilities include child well-being, I ask my colleagues to avoid the easy political path advanced by those who claim they would help vulnerable children by deporting them. We must say "no" to those who would hold up needed Homeland Security funding unless we agree to blame the victims—stripping these desperate children of their vital right to be heard.

Let's heed the good counsel of ABA President James R. Silkenat. He says:

The U.S. finds itself at a critical crossroads. The American Bar Association has long recognized the special vulnerabilities of children. We oppose any diminution in the rights available to Central American children under the law. It is imperative that children's immigration cases be conducted in the presence of an adjudicator. In addition, added resources are needed to reform and bolster our system for immigration adjudication, a system that has been severely short-funded for many years.

Shortcutting justice for children cuts short justice for abuse.

#### WORLDWIDE DAY OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIANS

(Mr. ROSKAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, moments ago, the House opened in prayer. Today, I am rising in solidarity with those who are calling for a worldwide day of prayer for Christians suffering in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and across the Middle East.

Radical Islamists have a phrase: "first the Saturday people, then the Sunday people."

Those who call for Israel's destruction are the same radicals who are persecuting Christians throughout the Middle East. Reported cases of Christians killed for their faith doubled worldwide from the previous year. Others have been kidnapped, forcibly converted, or exiled, while churches and holy sites have been destroyed.

Iraq's Christian community has dropped from 1.5 million people in 2003 to only 200,000 today, and in Mosul—home of one of the world's oldest Christian communities—ISIS militants have overrun the city. They are using this Arabic symbol and are painting it on homes to identify Nazarenes, or Christians, who are told to convert to Islam, pay a religious tax, or be executed. Now almost no Christians remain in Mosul, a city with a 2,000-year relationship with the Christian faith. The situation is also dire in Syria and elsewhere.

Middle East Christians need our prayers, our support, and our voices,